



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY PREET BHARARA

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Ellen Davis, Jerika Richardson,
Carly Sullivan
(212) 637-2600

ICE
Danielle Bennett
(202) 732-6121

MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES RETURN OF STOLEN CAMILLE PISSARRO WORK TO FRANCE

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and John Morton, the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), announced today the return to the French Government of a work known as *Le Marché*, by the artist Camille Pissarro, that was stolen in 1981 from the Faure Museum in Aix-les-Bains, France.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: "International trafficking in stolen art threatens every nation's ability to safeguard cultural treasures for future generations. It is very gratifying for our office to play a role in helping this artwork find its way back home after so many years."

ICE Director John Morton stated: "Returning this piece of art to the people of France is another great example of the ongoing work ICE HSI agents are doing to investigate the theft of cultural treasures and return them to their rightful owners. ICE's Homeland Security Investigations remains committed to combating cultural heritage crimes and righting the wrongs committed by the perpetrators of this illicit activity."

Le Marché was returned to the French Ambassador to the United States, François Delattre, today at a repatriation ceremony at the Kreeger Museum in Washington, D.C.

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

In 1981, *Le Marché* was stolen by Emile Guelton, who walked out of the Faure Museum in Aix-les-Bains, France, with the work under his jacket. The museum guard and another witness provided descriptions of the thief to French law enforcement authorities, but no one was apprehended at the time.

In 1985, Guelton approached the owner of a San Antonio, Texas, art gallery, Jay Adelman, and asked him to sell Le Marché. Sharyl Davis, who was using space in the art gallery at the time, purchased Le Marché for \$8,500.

In early 2003, Davis consigned Le Marché to Sotheby's New York for a May 2003 auction in which Sotheby's estimated the auction price range to be from \$60,000 to \$80,000. When Sotheby's asked Davis for provenance information about the print, Davis could only remember the man who consigned Le Marché to the San Antonio art gallery as "Frenchie." Davis asked for "Frenchie's" real name from Adelman, who told her it was Guelton and that he was from Paris. That information appeared in the auction catalogue with an image of Le Marché.

Just before the auction, French federal law enforcement officers learned that Le Marché was at Sotheby's. Based on the information in the auction catalogue, the French officers located and interviewed Guelton. Guelton confirmed that he knew Adelman, was living in Texas in 1985, sent a container of artwork from France to the United States in 1984, and sold Adelman paintings. In October 2003, the French officers showed the Faure Museum guard a prior arrest photo of Guelton, and he was able to identify him as the thief.

On January 11, 2010, a jury found that Le Marché was subject to forfeiture as property introduced into the United States in violation of the National Stolen Property Act, which, among other things, prohibits the transportation and sale of stolen property in interstate or foreign commerce. The Department of Justice sought the forfeiture of Le Marché in response to a treaty request from France that the artwork be seized, forfeited, and restored to France.

After a district court entered judgment forfeiting Le Marché to the United States based on the jury's findings, Davis appealed. On June 3, 2011, the Second Circuit affirmed the judgment.

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Mr. Bharara praised the investigative work of ICE HSI in this matter, and its ongoing efforts to find and repatriate stolen and looted art and cultural property.

The case is being handled by the Office's Asset Forfeiture Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Alberts is in charge of the case.

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